

Northampton Policing Review  
Full Commission  
MEETING AGENDA  
Tuesday, November 24th  
6pm-9pm  
Remote Meeting

**Join the Remote Meeting:**

<https://zoom.us/j/98804125442?pwd=S0Vtc3gzMTlCMnlzWW5FZUpyZGVnZz09>

**Video conference:**

Meeting ID: 988 0412 5442

Passcode: 970517

**Or by telephone, call:** +1 929 436 2866 US

1. Call to Order
  - a) Announcement of Zoom Recording
  - b) Roll Call
  - c) Approval of meeting minutes
- 2) Public Comment - 6-7pm
- 3) Subcommittee - Report Back
- 4) Public Hearing Discussion for Tuesday, December 1, 2020
  - a) Create agenda
  - b) Proposal update for public hearing interpretation services
- 5) Police attendance at committee & sub-committee meetings
- 6) New Business
- 7) Adjourn

## **1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Daniel Cannity at 6:09 PM.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Commissioner Lois Ahrens present  
Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman present  
Commissioner Booker Bush present  
Commissioner Daniel Cannity (co-chair) present  
Commissioner Nick Fleisher present  
Commissioner David Hoose present  
Commissioner Alex Jarrett present  
Commissioner Carmen Lopez not present  
Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido present  
Commissioner Dana Olivo (co-chair) present  
Commissioner Nnamdi Pole present  
Commissioner Michael Quinlan not present  
Commissioner Josey Rosales present  
Commissioner Cynthia Suopis present  
Commissioner Carol Owens

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZOOM RECORDING**

Commissioner Daniel Cannity made an announcement that this meeting was being recorded for the public record and would be available on Northampton Open Media, as well as, the City of Northampton website.

## **2. Public Comment - 6-7pm**

Ashwin Ravikumar (Amherst)- Assistant professor at Amherst college encouraged the commission to be bold and imaginative as they craft recommendations, as bold as new agencies and institutions to deliver community safety and justice. He explained that new structures outside of the police are happening, for example, building new agencies for restorative practices at colleges. He said, transformative demands can't be realized by police or existing structures and that new structures of accountability are needed. He said he hopes a new type of agency that can deliver on mental health services, domestic violence, and services for unhoused people will be directly accountable to communities.

Jose Adastra (Northampton resident and local organizer) seconded what community member Ashwin shared. He said the commission should not be encouraging any systems where police are involved in the new solution. He explained they cannot provide it and that police are part of the problem and part of the trauma. Jose encouraged the commission to propose an aspirational change and reminded the commissioners of the hundreds of community members who were in the streets demanding change and that this commission came from this protest. He called for imaginative solutions and abolition based action. He explained, we are inside and warm, while people he knows are suffering, cold, hungry, getting sick and dying outside and may be incarcerated before the commission comes up with solutions.

Sean Donovan (Northampton) shared he works for the Western Mass Recovery Learning Community, a peer-led organization supporting others in experiences they have with incarceration, recovery, and trauma. He shared he knows his community has been negatively impacted by police interactions in particular wellness checks and that there are people who have the wisdom to do work outside of the police such as peer respite houses and other alternatives to suicide groups without perpetuating the fear of further coercion. He said these resources haven't been tapped into yet and that police often escalate situations, which leads to further trauma in the community. Sean encouraged the committee to create creative solutions. He shared he's aware of folks who can't be here or are afraid to speak up.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity explained how to get in contact with the commissioners.

Ya Ping Douglass (Community member) said she agrees with Sean, Ashwin, and Jose and mentioned some community members and social workers were able to attend the Alternatives meeting. She said she wants to reiterate there were people who spoke to the importance of crisis response programs outside of police co responder programs and encouraged the commission toward peer led work as a gold standard.

Community member Noah (Umass student, Easthampton), said he supports what has been said tonight and thinks Northampton can be a torchbearer in a new model and could have a lot of influence in surrounding towns. He explained, he's researched salaries in Northampton, and the top fifty earners are police officers. He said he feels this is imbalanced.

### 3.) Subcommittee - Report Back

#### **Alternatives to Policing Subcommittee**

Commissioner Booker Bush mentioned all of the resources that have been shared including from Commissioner Carol Owen and Commissioner Nick Fliesher. He said during the next subcommittee meeting, they plan to discuss housing and the response to domestic violence. He said, they are continuing to talk about alternatives to mental health reactions and that there seems to be a spectrum of models from police getting called, to a partnership model, to a triage model, to peer-led community based groups that leave out the police all together, as well as peer based models that leave out social workers and psychologists and only use community based leaders.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett agreed with Commissioner Booker Bush and would like to add substance abuse as another area they will be looking at in future meetings.

Commissioner Carol Owens shared when we talk about needs for treatment, housing needs, and mental health needs she sees it as a venn diagram that is overlapping, as well as history of trauma. She said the commission needs to center vulnerable groups who are most exposed and vulnerable to arrest. She said it's compelling to hear from community members that remind us of this and that she's interested in having continued conversations with people who have worked with peer led programs in the past.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he is looking into having people working for peer-led organizations come talk to the subcommittee and said he would love to hear from Sean (community member) and would like to restate that avoiding co-responder systems and moving toward a peer led model, feels like an important starting point and like the subcommittee is moving in the right direction.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett noted the commission has not been able to find data about the effectiveness of peer led programs. He explained, the more data they can get that shows there is good experience, and the more we can push the recommendation and the more likely the mayor and the city council will listen.

Commissioner Booker Bush said he is trying to contact people from peer led organizations to come and asks a question about the commission offering an honorarium.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said his position is people should be compensated for their testimony and information. He explained that often brown people have to educate white people and the commission should talk about an honorarium for their expertise.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity said that has been on his to do list to check in with the Mayor. He says it's on his list and he will do it after the meeting.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher said in doing outreach to the peer community who have received services or whose lived experience has involved them with the system, the commissioner should try to get a range and look at the various places the commission might reach out to to get public or personal comment from people specific to the services they have received. He mentioned the Starlight Center as an organization which serves people with serious mental

health challenges.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens wondered if the commission has a hearing where people can share for more than three minutes to have a discussion that could be publicized to the Northampton community that this is happening. She said a huge part of what the commission is doing is educating themselves and the public. She suggested this as an alternative to community members only coming to subcommittee meetings. She said if people are coming as part of their jobs, the commission shouldn't pay them extra especially as this is remote and that for people who don't have jobs, it feels differently entirely.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said it's a good idea to invite people with expertise to the large public hearings. He advised the commission proceed with caution because the number of people who come to provide testimony is large. He shared he feels unsure if an expert should come talk there and encouraged the commissioners to attend other subcommittees especially if someone is coming to talk to the commission so commissioners can ask questions. He said, if someone is not from a large institution, they should be paid even if they work at an organization, especially people who are on the grounds doing the work.

Commissioner Booker Bush agreed with Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido. He noted most of the restorative justice and peer-led programs are websites and that funding seems minimal. He said all of them are doing marvelous things on an almost volunteer basis. He said he would want these people to care for the people who need these services and that they are clearly not in a good financial place. He said if they call organizations with government contracts it might be another issue.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens offered clarification and said in terms of hearing, this would be after the December date and wouldn't be structured as a forum, but would be a public event where people are given an opportunity to speak, and part could be a public comment period afterward.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher offered he would like to keep the process moving as easily as impossible. He said he feels fine if speakers come to subcommittees and make other commissioners aware so they can attend. He mentioned the Alternatives subcommittee has the most expansive mandate and that their work is already drawing the commission in.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido offered a question for the other subcommittees and wondered if they struggle to get people to talk to them and whether they're also asking speakers to join.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher mentioned his committee raised the question of having the chief of police or someone who she assigns to attend the meeting. He mentioned this came up as a question and something the subcommittee members feel should be discussed.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity said the Budget & Spending Subcommittee hasn't done outreach yet and is still piled high in spreadsheets and numbers. He said the way it's going, it might require someone coming to talk about funding which could be specific to the police department or broader. He says he's received information from community members about different models (Minneapolis & Denver). He said he spoke with folks from Dasher in Denver. He said he thinks it would be good to bring people in to talk about their inspiration, process and outcomes, implementation as well as what the reaction from the city was and how they reacted.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens shared she hopes when speakers are invited, there will be some sort of public notice, more than emails to commissioners, so people can participate. She offered the idea of submitting a news release for community members to know about the speakers attending subcommittees. She said she feels it's important for people to know what is happening.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity shares for the public hearing, the city put out a media release and put information on social media. He said if there are other distribution avenues, members can let Dana, Dan, or Noa know so they can add to the sharing of information.

#### Budgets and Spending Subcommittee

Commissioner Daniel Cannity offered a recap for the budgets and spending subcommittee. He shared they got access to overtime and details for the police. He said the city makes roughly one million dollars a year in police detail work which gets put into the general fund and isn't allocated for anything in specific. He said, if the commission is looking for funding for a new department and pilot plans, there is one million dollars to start reinvesting in community services so they are robust. He said there are some discrepancies that need to be reconciled and that the subcommittee will be looking into the process shifting funds into mental health care and wellness checks services outside of the police department.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens wondered about the biggest percentage of time that police use and how it correlates the amount of money spent. She wondered whether a huge piece of it is property checks, wellness checks, and things that could not be a policing function. She wondered about a ranking of activities from most to least and trying to correlate that to a money amount to better see what the city is spending. She mentioned the subcommittee is looking into the use of vehicles and how much is spent on gas and maintenance when much of the driving is done for property checks.

Commissioner David Hoose shared he doesn't want the commission to spend one million dollars too fast. He urged the committee to look at the low hanging fruit. He said a lot of this has been characterized as defunding the police, when it is bringing money into the general city fund. He shared his focus is less on cost and feels more worried about the footprint of police.

Commissioner Dan encourages the commission to look directly to the community for ideas for services outside of policing and to look at how much the money the department makes from asset forfeiture and He said the subcommittee does not yet know the questions they need to ask and whether the questions will be about revenue based or activities, personnel management, or HR practices.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said if the commission is making decisions that would impact police officers, it would feel strange to not invite them. He mentioned police could be attending these meetings anonymously but it might be helpful to hear from them directly. He shared there has felt like there has been trepidation to invite them to speak. He said he would love to hear other's experiences and views about under what circumstances it would be helpful for police to weigh in.

Commissioner Cynthia says this issue is on the agenda for today and asks for confirmation. She wonders if there are more categories about detail work.

Commissioner Dan only have pay and rate and how much they receive as salary, whether they receive overtime, as well as detail work set at \$51/ an hour which the city takes 40% of that. They don't have data by pay of what the detail work specifically was.

Commissioner Cynthia Suopis said this might be low-hanging fruit within the detail work and looks forward to the discussion.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said the commissioner brought this issue up early on in the Commission process meetings and shared he wants to hear the narrative from the police department about their funding.

### Policies and Services Subcommittee

Commissioner Nick Fliasher said the subcommittee focused on five to six specific areas and looked at reducing the footprint of police as a general goal with a spectrum of ways to do that. He said, in looking at policies and services they are looking at the existing police department versus another model and that the committee looked at the things the police department might do differently. He mentioned their open data portal and their commitment to transparency, yet named the committee does not fully understand the process. He said the goal of understanding aspects of what they do is a priority of the subcommittee and that they are in the process of formulating questions about processing complaints, training and education, strategic planning, mental health issues, and how they break down their time by percentage. He said transparency is their goal and there should be some way the public is able to interact with these issues.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said social justice education and training has been documented to have zero impact to how police respond to racial incidents. He shared his conflicted feelings about talking with the police as an immigrant and as a brown person. He shared he understands it might be helpful to the process and that racial justice should get the same thoughtfulness as climate change when it impacts the lives of people of color, when the police are a white supremacist institution.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said the website documents a process of handling complaints. He recommended the commission ask for a representational sample of cases the commission can consider. He shared on the matter of training, the commission should be interested in the evidence that trainings don't work, and that the commission shouldn't skip the part where it's able to find out what the police department is actually doing to compare. He said, even if training is given, the question of how they document the training, whether there is evaluation, as well as continuing education requirements, is important. He said he is not willing to argue that because some trainings are ineffective, that all are ineffective.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said just because they have extensive training and policies and procedures that that doesn't correlate to what the police are doing. She said her main question is about what the police are actually doing, which is not reflected in the police logs. She shared, not everyone feels comfortable walking into the police station and making a complaint and that what gets reported and the reality of peoples' experiences with police can be far from one another when there is fear of retaliation.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity said most of the training that police departments get is implicit bias training and mentions the efficacy of that is only there if they are open to the training. He said this doesn't do much about the police recruitment process which might affect the biases they walk in the door with. He said the commission should hold the police to the same standards as the commissioners are. He suggested asking- how does the police department know if the training they are paying for, is effective as well as trying to understand what policies were invented because it was meaningful, versus something passed down with tradition, and holding the police department to the same standard. He offered if the subcommittees are forming questions, they can look at internal affairs and how the police are dealing with their own internal issues and how they solve their issues.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman said there is a lot of conversation about policies and information about how the Northampton police should be behaving on duty, which is thorough and meeting the standard. She mentioned they have certification from police membership organizations to make sure they meet policing standards. She said she's interested in the specific metrics outside of standard policing metrics. She explained further that if the commission is interested in metrics around social justice, human centered interactions and community protections, the commission needs to name the metrics and how they are evaluating it. She said the commission should spend time creating these metrics and that the data itself is flawed because police self report the race of people they interact with. She said there is data on police across the country misidentifying race so they don't come under scrutiny and wondered what lens the commission is looking at the data. She said the power of testimony and witness should be weighed over an excel sheet when we know it's flawed.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido recommended the commission go to the department's website and pretend they are a person of color. He said people of color should be leading restorative justice initiatives. He said he feels the Alternatives Subcommittee meeting is doing deep analysis and invites others to attend other subcommittees to see the work they are doing. He said it feels necessary to be clear about their process and that when the commission looks at the police logs, they want to get to the point where they are deeply talking about analysis. He said transparency needs to happen for the community to be able to trust. He mentioned he does not see people of color hanging out in downtown Northampton and that if people are feeling oppressed and the altercations are with young people, homeless people, and folks with mental health problems, it needs to be addressed. He said the police was started to control slaves in the south and that the commission's job is to change this.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole said he has questions and suggestions for improving the metrics. He said the commission can do a lot to change policies as they exist and to help the department think differently about what they judge as a complaint.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he has privilege to share what he wants to say and feels safe and that people who feel targeted will not want to expose themselves. He said testimony is central to the commission's work.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity said he will work to put videos on Northampton Public media so it is accessible and Noa Coffey-Moore will be working to make the shared google drive open and available to the public. He said people who have experience are welcomed to share information



with us as well.

## **8) Public Hearing Discussion for Tuesday, December 1, 2020**

Commissioner Daniel Cannity said there is a public hearing which starts at 6:30pm and asked if anyone has any agenda items they would like to add.

Commissioner Josey Rosales said they would like to see funds that have been cut from the budget go into investment opportunities into services that impact Northampton's most vulnerable populations like a warming center that could go into the preliminary proposal.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity asked for more agenda items and shared the purpose is for discussion.

Commissioner Booker Bush shared it might be helpful to share the proposals they are considering and to ask for feedback so community members can respond to something versus doing an open meeting. He proposed thirty to forty minutes open comment and perhaps each committee can pose an issue they are wanting direct feedback on.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher agreed with Commissioner Booker Bush and shared he liked the spectrum of possibilities of police involvement and found this framework useful so people can talk about where they can locate themselves and view the commission recommendations on this spectrum.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens shared she's unsure about the language around 'spectrum' and wonders if there will be time for the subcommittees to report about the work they've been doing. She shared she likes the idea of posing questions to receive responses and noted the importance of telling community members about the hearing.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity said the questions will need to be decided during this meeting, or the process will need to happen very quickly. He reflected hearing the importance of open comment at the beginning, posing multiple questions as a subcommittee and asking for feedback. He noted the importance of balancing the time it takes to have people respond to multiple questions while keeping the agenda on track. He reminded the commission that money has already been selected for reallocation and there have been concerns about public bathrooms not being available. He posed the idea of working these issues into the upcoming public hearing.

Commissioner Dana Olivo wondered when the agenda needs to be completed.

Commissioner Dana Olivo, Commissioner Dan Cannity, and Noa Coffey-Moore (Administrative Assistant) discussed edits to the agenda and adhering to open meeting law.

Commissioner Josey Rosales said they understands this is not policing related and argues all of these topics are intimately interwoven with one another. They explained, people do things out of necessity, and through addressing peoples' needs do we lower peoples' actions and take away

the need for policing in the first place, which justifies defunding the police and putting funding toward other services. They said when people don't have access to bathrooms, public urination becomes a crime.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher agreed with Commissioner Josey Rosales and said this is only one category that interacts with policing and thinks the commission doesn't need to pose a question. He said the community that has shared thus far have specific ideas and thoughts they want to share and questions whether the commission needs to offer a question.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity agreed with Commissioner Josey Rosales about looking into this issue as a commission soon. He wondered about issuing a motion of support as a collective body. He shared, one of the things identities is people who are underhoused are overpoliced. He shared an example of houseless people in Pulaski Park saying they cannot police them because they are understaffed. He said this speaks to people looking to the police to police houseless people and wonders what this policing looks like and whether it leads to arrest. He said in terms of having spaces that are safe for people to go to, the commission can talk about what funds are available, especially during COVID and the weather changes which happen every year. He wondered what the commission can do more immediately.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett mentioned at the Alternatives to Policing subcommittee, they will be looking at housing for their next meeting. He said, the city has an ordinance review committee as well that is looking at issues like this that have space for open comment. He said the Public hearing is specific for hearing from the public and advocates for brief reports from subcommittees to touch upon these issues and have it be brief in order to hear from the public. He said there is room for back and forth and for the commission to ask for clarification if need be so that the commission can hear from people as much as possible.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens said she likes the idea for commissioners to ask questions rather than just listening and being able to engage. She said she hopes some of the committees can acknowledge what is going on in the budget.

Commissioner David Hoose shared he hopes he lives long enough to live in a community where the police are not needed. He said the commission may end up with something short of getting rid of police officers for everything and anticipates the commission will reduce the footprint of the police and wonders whether it makes sense to focus the public hearing on asking where the commission should start.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he feels he does not have a plan to invite people to join the conversation. He requested Commissioner Daniel Cannity to involve Jose Adastra in figuring out how to have community members engaged in the public hearing.

Commissioner Nnamdi Pole suggested asking for public comment on low hanging fruit (places that are clear where police are not needed) as well as what community members feel police are helpful for.

Commissioner Dan Cannity asked community member Jose Adastra to unmute and share his thoughts.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido offered to clarify the question and is interested in how the commission can reach out to affected communities.

Community member Jose Adastra offered to set up a zoom session over the phone for a specific date for some members. He mentioned sometimes we're dealing with folks with a range of mental states and challenges so sometimes it is hard to organize everyone at once. He said Tay Tay has been getting meetings together in the park and could coordinate with them and that it might be easier to get pre-recorded testimonies. He said flexibility might be helpful.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido thanked Jose Adastra for his thoughts.

Commissioner Dan Cannity said working with safety protocols for live gatherings is important. Wonders how they can set up a space outdoors that could gather safely. He noted when asking people when policing hasn't worked for them, the question around protecting anonymity and having it be a part of the public record is important and will be a balancing act.

Commissioner Elizabeth Barajas-Roman wondered if they can pose a research question to the city. She said the comment has to be logged but a member can say a different name. She wondered if it has to be identifiable for public commentor if it is just the comment itself so people can hear. She said zoom has filters which can create anonymity.

Commissioner Dan Cannity mentioned the city can testify under pseudonyms but doesn't think there's a hard and fast rule. He said he would like to see them creating a space where they might not otherwise feel like they have recourse and making sure they feel comfortable relating experiences in ways that are meaningful.

Commissioner Booker Bush said outreach feels important and he intends to contact the Pioneer Valley Workers Center as well as Ministries of the Night to ask if there are ways to bring those voices in. He wondered if houseless folks will be in shelters during the time of the meeting, and wondered if the commission will have to move to mid day meetings. He said he feels interested in finding people who would find interpretive services helpful, to attend.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity asked if people feel comfortable using their own contacts in the community. He mentioned the city website, and the Gazette article which will share the flier. He offered an option to have the flyer translated to spanish and prompts the commissioners if anyone can do that.

Commissioner Dan Cannity asked the commissioners about the agenda, and in lieu of more time to discuss, said if it's left to the co chairs to decide the agenda, he's suggesting five minute updates from the subcommittees which leaves it open for public comment.

The commissioners discuss the agenda for the public hearing.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity asked whether to motion to assign the agenda to the co chairs. Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido suggested the commission do the work to address affected voices being in the room without fear of retaliation and because of this it will be pervasive to ask a question that only privileged community members who are able to be there may give a one sided view of what the community wants.

Commissioner Nick Fleisher shared he can't agree to the plan and that it would provide a false narrative but that it is too late to have further discussion. He would like to move ahead and agreed with the co chairs making the decision.

Commissioner Daniel Cannity offered he shares Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido's concerns and asked for any other discussion besides Dana and Dan coming up with the agenda for the Dec 1st public hearing.

**Commissioner Daniel Cannity moved to motion for the cochairs coming up with the agenda for the Dec 1st public hearing.**

**The motion is passed 11-1 with the exception of Commissioner Nnamdi Pole.**

**Commissioner Daniel Cannity asked for a motion to table the decisions for the Police attendance at committee & sub-committee meetings to the next meeting. Commissioner Nnamdi Pole seconds the motion. The motion is passed unanimously.**

## **5. Adjourn**

**Commissioner Daniel Cannity moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00p.m. The motion to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously 12-0 by a roll call vote.**